

WEBINAR MATERIALS

**"Assistive Technology (AT) Evaluation:
Hitting the Target and Supporting Implementation"**

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Presenter:

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ABOUT THE PRESENTER:



Bryan Ayres, M.Ed. is a licensed general and special educator, and currently the Director of the Technology and Curriculum Access Center at Easter Seals Arkansas. He has over 30 years experience working with children, youth and adults with a variety of disabilities.

Bryan holds degrees from Henderson State University (BME, 83) in Arkadelphia, Arkansas and the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (M.Ed., 87) in Special Education with an emphasis in severe disabilities and applied behavior analysis.

Bryan serves as an Assistive Technology Consultant with specialized training from the National Association of State Directors of Special Education. He is a member of RESNA and participates in the communication technologies and computer access special interest group and is a co-author of the quality indicators for assistive technology in post secondary education settings (<http://qiat-ps.org>). His special interests include assistive and adaptive technologies, universal design for learning, and curriculum and assessment access. He presents trainings in local, statewide and national venues.

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AT Evaluation: Hitting the Target and Supporting Implementation



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An AT Evaluation, What is it?

- An AT evaluation should be done by a professional or team of professionals, which often includes an independent evaluator, knowledgeable about the specific needs of the child.
- The evaluator should have experience and training in AT devices, services, and implementation, and be able to integrate the technologies into the curriculum through the IEP or 504 Plan.

"Fundamentals of an AT Evaluation, Eve Kessler, Smart Kids with Learning Disabilities, <http://www.smartkidswithld.org/guide-to-action/at-tool-kit/expert-advice>.

A thorough evaluation may include the following components:

- Review of evaluation results and IEP goals and objectives
- Discussion with parents and those who work with the child
- Interaction with the child and the technology
- Trial in a variety of settings in which the device is likely to be used
- Consideration of the child's and the family's feelings about the devices
- Observation of the child using a full range of devices, moving along the continuum from no technology to low-tech to high-tech
- Analysis from trials regarding the child's ability and accuracy when using various technologies, including positioning and settings that work best

Assistive Technology Device

- Assistive Technology Device--Assistive technology device means any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a child with a disability. (34 C.F.R. § 300.5)

P.L. 108-446. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004

Assistive Technology Services

- Assistive technology service means any service that directly assists a child with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device. (34 C.F.R § 300.6) The term includes:
 - Evaluation
 - Acquisition
 - Getting it working
 - Coordination
 - Training for Child, Family and Professionals

34 C.F.R. § 300.105

- Each public agency must ensure that assistive technology devices or assistive technology services, or both, as those terms are defined in §§ 300.5 and 300.6, respectively, are made available to a child with a disability if required as a part of the child's
 - On a case-by-case basis, the use of school-purchased technology devices in a child's home or in other settings is required if the child's IEP team determines that the child needs access to those devices to receive FAPE.

FAPE and LRE

- Free and Appropriate Public Education
- Least Restrictive Environment
- 34 C.F.R. §300.39 Special Education
 - Means specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability, including—
 - Adapting as appropriate to the needs of an eligible child under this part, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction.....

FAPE and LRE continued

- To address the unique needs of the child that result from the child's disability
- To ensure access of the child to the general curriculum, so that the child can meet the educational standards within the jurisdiction of the public agency that apply to all children.

Assistive Technology is only a tool...Good instruction is essential

- Assistive Technology Consideration
 - Consider the students abilities, strengths, and needs
 - Consider the environments
 - Consider the tasks and activities
 - Consider possible strategies and tools

Adapted from: Joy Zabala
www.joyzabala.com

Disability can affect.....

- Fine Motor
- Gross Motor
- Mobility
- Expressive Communication
- Receptive Communication
- Cognition
- Hearing
- Seeing
- Physical health

Consideration and Evaluation

- Consideration is a short, time limited decision during an IEP meeting or program review to discuss assistive technology need or changes.
- AT evaluation is a more formal functional evaluation with some or all of the possible components mentioned early for AT evaluation.

Medical Model Assessment

- Largely based in an expert model, with a reliance on local/student centered facilitator (often a parent or case manager)
- Sometimes only “in on it” during the time that the feature match is made. It takes hard work and communication to make it functional for the person in their home environments.

Ayres, B. (2011). AT Evaluation: No Shortcut to Good Outcomes. Family Center on Technology and Disability, October 2011.

A Functional Approach

- The issues associated with AT evaluation may be very simple or more complex and challenging. Evaluation takes place when these issues are beyond the scope of the problem solving that occurs as a part of normal service delivery.
- What are key components: Clear procedures, team has the knowledge and skills to evaluate, involve customary environments, done in reasonable timelines, data driven, AT device and service recommendations documented and re-evaluation occurs whenever changes are needed.

QUALITY INDICATORS FOR ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES, QIAT Consortium, www.qiat.org, (2009)

Questions?



Why AT Evaluations Break Down



- Procedures for conducting AT assessment are not defined, or are not customized to meet the student's needs.

Teamwork!

- A team approach to assessment is not utilized.



Building Internal Capacity and Finding Qualified Assistance

- Individuals participating in an assessment do not have the skills necessary to conduct the assessment, and do not seek additional help.



Trials Take Time. Teams often hurry!

- Team members do not have adequate time to conduct assessment processes, including necessary trials with AT.



Communication Needs to Clear and Timely!

- Communication between team members is not clear.



Student Centered?

- The student is not involved in the assessment process.



Collaboration!

- When the assessment is conducted by any team other than the student's IEP team, the needs of the student or expectations for the assessment are not communicated.



What Can A Parent or Advocate Do?

- We've considered your child's need for AT and have determined that s/he will not benefit.....
 - I understand. I'd like to review the documentation that supports your decision. In particular, I would like to see the data regarding performance with AT and performance without.

<http://www.wrightslaw.com/info/at.strat.edyburn.htm>

Q: Who pays for an (AT) evaluation?

- A: When an AT evaluation is recommended by the IEP team, the school will pay for it. It is not so straightforward when a parent requests an AT evaluation if the school has already determined that it is not necessary. Parents have the right under IDEA to get an independent AT evaluation and the school must consider the information gleaned from the evaluation. However, this does not mean that the school will pay for the cost of the AT evaluation or any recommended AT device and/or services.

<http://uwctds.washington.edu/resources/legal/legal%20resources/faqsanswers.asp>

Q: What are my options if the school refuses to conduct or pay for an AT evaluation?

- A: It usually works most effectively if you approach the subject of AT in the spirit of cooperation, offering to work with the school on an appropriate IEP that includes necessary AT. Informal negotiations with the school administration or IEP team are usually the best place to start. Parents should offer to work together with the IEP team to reach a mutually agreeable solution, and be sure that the request for an AT evaluation has been clearly heard.

<http://uwctds.washington.edu/resources/legal/legal%20resources/faqsanswers.asp>

Use a template to collect your own data on the plan, responsibilities and evaluating progress or making changes.



<http://natri.uky.edu/>

Resources

- <http://www.wati.org/>
- <http://www.educationtechpoints.org/>
 - Referral, Evaluation, Extended Evaluation, Plan Development, Implement the Plan, Periodic Review
- <http://gpat.org/>
- <http://fctd.info/>
- <http://www.greatschools.org/special-education/assistive-technology/784-parents-guide-to-assistive-technology.gs>
- www.closingthegap.com
- www.atia.org
- www.csun.org
- <http://www.csun.edu/cod/conference/sessions/index.php>



Thanks for Participating!

Please check our web site for other workshops on software, hardware, strategies and processes. www.eastersealsar.com
Technology & Curriculum Access Center,
Easter Seals Arkansas in Collaboration with the Arkansas Department of Education, Special Education and the Southwest Americans with Disabilities Act Center
